

began to write " Une Page d'Amour," which he had planned before leaving Paris. Edmond de Goncourt mentions an amusing discussion started by Zola, apropos of this book, at a dinner given to Tourgeneff, who was leaving for Kussia. Love, in Zola's opinion, did not master one so absolutely as some pretended; and, said he, phenomena similar to those which might be observed in love were also to be found in friendship and patriotism. For his part, he had never been madly in love, and therefore found it difficult to depict such a state of things in others. Elaubert and Goncourt admitted a similar incapacity, arising from the same cause, and it was agreed that the only one of the party whom experience might have qualified to portray the great passion adequately, was Tourgeneff, who, however, was unfortunately deficient in the necessary critical sense.

The question whether Zola's portrayal of love in "Une Page d'Amour" was adequate is certainly open to doubt; and whatever the power and beauty of the book's pictures of Paris, as viewed from the Trocadero, at sunrise, at sundown, at night, in a storm, and under the snow, one may demur to the often expressed opinion that they were the best he ever limned. They doubtless cost him an effort, but after the great labour which the writing of "L'Assommoir"

had involved, " Une Page d'Amour," with its few characters and its narrow scope of action, was almost a restful book. It should be observed, indeed, that Zola seldom penned two great panoramic works in succession. His own explanation of the course he took in writing such comparatively quiet books as " Une Page d'Amour," " La Joie de Vivre " and "Le Re"ve" between works of crowded incident like "L'Assommoir," "Nana," "Germinal," "La Terre," and "La